

Using NewsHour Extra Feature Stories

STORY

Conflict in Georgia Puts Focus on Tensions in the Caucasus 08/12/08

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/world/july-dec08/georgia_8-12.html

Estimated Time: One 45-minute class period with possible extension

[Student Worksheet](#) (reading comprehension and discussion questions without answers)

PROCEDURE

1. WARM UP

Use initiating questions to introduce the topic and find out how much your students know.

2. MAIN ACTIVITY

Have students read NewsHour Extra's feature story and answer the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the student handout.

3. DISCUSSION

Use discussion questions to encourage students to think about how the issues outlined in the story affect their lives and express and debate different opinions.

INITIATING QUESTIONS

1. Where is Russia? What is the Soviet Union and how does it relate to Russia?

2. What are ethnic groups? How and why are they important in international relations and politics?

3. Reading and Comprehension Questions

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS – [Student Worksheet](#)

1. What is the conflict between Russia and Georgia?

ANSWER

After Georgia attacked pro-Russia separatists in South Ossetia, a breakaway region of Georgia, Russia attacked Georgia and invaded some of Georgia's territory

2. What was President Bush's response to Russia's invasion?

ANSWER

President Bush strongly urged Russia to stop threatening Georgia and its democratically elected government in a statement late Monday. He asked Russia to hammer out a cease-fire agreement.

3. What recent development did Russia object to relating to Georgia and Western countries?

ANSWER

Georgia has moved toward joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance formed by the U.S. and Western European nations. Russia sees Georgian NATO membership as an effort to weaken Russia's influence, according to the Associated Press.

4. What country did Georgia used to be a part of?

ANSWER
The Soviet Union.

5. What campaign promise did President Saakashvili make?

ANSWER
Saakashvili promised to take control of both regions as part of his presidential campaign, Georgetown University professor Christine Wallander told the NewsHour.

6. Why has the U.S. been supportive of Georgia?

ANSWER
The U.S. has supported Georgia as it has moved from being a former Soviet territory to a pro-Western democracy. Georgia also has approximately 2,000 troops aiding the U.S.-led involvement in Iraq – the third largest of any country participating in the coalition.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (more research might be needed)

1. Do you think it was right for Georgia to attack the separatists? Was it right for Russia to respond the way it did? Why do you think both countries acted the way they did?

2. Why do you think there are people living in Georgia who feel a stronger link with Russia? Name some other examples where people did not necessarily agree with the boundaries of their country or state?

3. Why are conflicts from the Soviet Union era still important today? What other conflicts are related to countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union?

4. Should President Bush have ordered American forces to protect Georgia? Why or why not?

Extension Activity

Have students write a 300-500 word essay on this topic providing clear examples. Send your completed editorial to NewsHour Extra (extra@newshour.org). Exceptional essays might be published on our Web site.